



Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd

September 12, 1936 - August 26, 2025

Corita Ann Essex Boyd of Almyra, Arkansas, passed away on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at the age of 88, just a few weeks shy of her 89th birthday. Corita was born in Searcy, Arkansas, an only child to Garold and Mary Ann Essex, on Sept. 12, 1936. Corita graduated from DeWitt High School in 1954 and then attended TWU - Texas Woman's University – in Denton, Texas, from which she has maintained friendships over these many years, with a degree in Education. After returning from college, Corita became a history teacher at DeWitt High School where she worked for many years and maintained a love for and from many former students. During that time, she reconnected with her handsome former high school classmate, graduate, and athlete, David Richard Boyd, who was farming. They married on August 22, 1959, and just celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary this year in 2025. She raised their four daughters who have all remained very close to her throughout her life. Corita was a multifaceted woman who excelled

in many areas, pursuing diverse interests and passions. There are so many things that could compete for the top spot on her list of “hobbies,” but one of the first would certainly be gardening. From tulips to hydrangeas to caladiums to begonias to pansies to trees, if it could be planted in the ground, she could grow it. Even in recent years when she needed more help with the manual labor, she would sit methodically on a bench in her backyard and direct David and her daughters in creating a beautiful landscape every year. She fertilized, watered, and cared for all the flowers, trees, and plants in the yard around the house on a daily basis. However, it could be said that she was a historian at heart and a gardener in soul. She loved history of all places and peoples, but nothing more dear to her than family and Arkansas County history. She had a keen interest in her own religion as a Christian, and loved discussing the history of Christianity and the meanings and stories behind biblical scriptures. Just as she cared for plants, she cared for any stray animal that would cross her path or enter her yard, from ducks and geese to deer to dogs and cats, so long as they didn’t interfere with any of her other passions, like her flower beds, and would make sure that all the birds that she watched with binoculars from the kitchen even had enough feed in the coldest of winters. Corita would adopt them right off the road to her home, and they would become part of the family and

certainly never left this loving environment she created for them, a regular animal oasis in the countryside. She donated to so many animal rescue missions that she had a free calendar, button, or pen for about any type of animal one could think of. She was also an avid cook and baker, with many recipes that quite literally cannot be duplicated. She could put ingredients together just as she did with the numerous flowers and plants and stray animals and come up with a great result. Many delectable meals were served in her kitchen, feeding David, the girls, farm workers, friends, and family. Some call this tradition, but it was routine in the Boyd household. Corita loved visiting with family, friends, and new acquaintances. She had a plethora of interests to discuss, never wanting for conversational topics to fit anyone's needs or curiosities. She loved television programs, including PBS, British comedies (Mr. Bean, for one example), murder mysteries of all types (like the British Midsomer Murders), cooking shows, history and documentary programs, shows involving exploration, wildlife, and cultures, and the list goes on. She also acquired more knowledge through ardent reading of fiction and many, many nonfiction novels, all of which she could remember in remarkable detail. Corita was definitely not stingy with her knowledge, as listeners would not even need to pick-up a single

book, encyclopedia, or watch a TV show if they just visited Corita from time to time, imparting all the information they needed to know in vivid play-by-play fashion. Her enthusiasm over her subjects of interest was palpable in her presence. This enthusiasm carried over to holiday decorating, participating in the Methodist Church choir, where she was a very gifted vocalist, and playing handbells for many years as a steadfast member of the DeWitt First United Methodist Church, performing theatrically in the SACFAC group, staying connected to former teachers through her involvement in Kappa Kappa Iota, activities like painting, and volunteering and donating to a myriad of charities. For many years, she did all of these things while caring for four young girls that were always at her feet and involved in so many church and school activities that Corita also lent a huge helping hand. This care extended over to grandchildren and great-grandchildren as the years progressed. While exceptionally protective of her family, including outdoor escapades with the 410 in hand, Corita did not hold back her expression of love for others which was most often quietly expressed in hundreds if not thousands of handwritten holiday cards, get-well cards, happy anniversary card, and random letters to friends and family over the last sixty-plus years, including recent years of sending memorial letters as secretary of the DeWitt Cemetery,

plus physical work at such places as Dana's House, including tutoring children. She always kept other people in the forefront of her mind. Throughout all of this, Corita loved to laugh. She would get so absorbed in the daily comics and laugh so hard without realizing anyone was in the room with her, which, needless to say, was very infectious. If it wasn't clear what she was laughing about, there was no need to worry as she would tell you soon enough and laugh all over again. Not surprisingly, Disney World and the beach were her happy places, where, even in later years, she could let her imagination run wild and experience it on the trips she took with family. To say that Corita lived a full life would be a gross understatement. Surrounded by the beauty of her gardens, the comfort of her animals, the fullness of knowledge, the pleasant smells of her casseroles, the love of her husband and family, and the security of being a person of faith, she lived a life of nurturing and helping all of those things to grow, bringing all of this grand mixture of work, effort, interest, and kindness into a peace that knows no understanding. She was a wonderful mother and irreplaceable. Corita Ann Essex Boyd, a wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, teacher, and friend, was preceded in death by her parents, Garold and Mary Ann Essex, and her grandparents, Jason and Maggie Essex. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, David Richard Boyd; her children,

Danita Cotten (Steve), Renee Rubach (James), Christina Boyd (Tee), and Suzette Boyd; her grandchildren, Stephanie Cotten, Brandon Cotten (Mandy), Tanner Rubach (Blakely), and Chandler Boyd-Mathews; and her great grandchildren, Peyton Cotten, Zoe Cotten, Townsend Cotten and Billie Rubach. Funeral services will be conducted by Essex Funeral Home and held on Friday, August 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the DeWitt Methodist Church, 608 S. Grandview Dr., DeWitt, Arkansas, followed by a graveside service at DeWitt Cemetery. The family requests that donations be made in her name to the DeWitt Cemetery, 871 Essex Rd., Almyra, AR 72003, the National Wasp WWII Museum, P.O. Box 96679, Washington, DC 20090-6679 and Heifer International, Donor Services, P.O. Box 8058, Little Rock, AR 72203. www.essexfuneralhome.com

Cemetery Details

DeWitt Cemetery

DeWitt, AR 72042

Previous Events

Service

AUG **29**. 2:00 PM (CT)

DeWitt Methodist Church
608 S. Grandview Dr.
DeWitt, AR 72042

Tribute Wall



“ I am so sorry to learn of Mrs. Boyd's passing. She was one of my favorite teachers! I am thankful to say I last saw her at my Dad's Celebration of Life. It was a wonderful surprise to see & visit with her! My thoughts & prayers are with her family.

Rebecca Burnett Bryant - September 05, 2025 at 08:02 PM



Rebecca Burnett Bryant
Bryant, AR

Rebecca Burnett Bryant - September 05, 2025 at 08:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd.

August 29, 2025 at 12:33 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd.



August 29, 2025 at 12:33 PM

EL

“ *What a beautiful tribute to such a beautiful lady!! Love and prayers for all her huge loving family!! Chandler, Kyler said he's Praying for you and your family!!* ❤️❤️🕊️🕊️



Ester Hagemen, LPN - August 28, 2025 at 05:21 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd.

August 28, 2025 at 03:47 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd.



August 28, 2025 at 03:47 PM

CG

“ *Christina, I'm so sorry for your loss. You and your family will be in my thoughts and prayers. I never met your mother but from our talks I know you were a wonderful daughter and I know your mother must have been proud of you and thankful to have you.*

Chris Goins - August 28, 2025 at 03:19 PM

BB

So sorry to hear about Corita. She was a blessing to her family, her friends, community, and Church. She will be missed by all who knew her!

Beth Hollanger and Alesha Hollanger Bart - August 28, 2025 at 04:22 PM



“ *Growing up with Suzette, Mrs. Corita and Mr. David were like second parents! Such fond memories of big breakfasts after sleep overs and always loved seeing Mrs. Corita doing here last minute Christmas Eve shopping riding around the square with her station wagon completely full of presents! She had such a quiet strength and always stayed so calm even with all the chaos that a house full of girls and all their friends could generate. She will be missed. Sending thoughts, prayers, and lots of love for the entire family.*



Mendy Fisher - August 28, 2025 at 12:17 PM

PD

“ *Prentice & Sue Davis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Corita Ann Essex Boyd*



Prentice & Sue Davis - August 28, 2025 at 08:33 AM

CD

I always enjoyed visiting with Mrs Corita through the years. Prayers for her family and friends.

Cindy DeVazier - August 31, 2025 at 03:11 PM